

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously Presented): A socket for a dialyzer that connects a plug of the dialyzer and a dialysate tube for supplying or discharging a dialysate, wherein the socket comprises a socket main body having a coupling part to be fitted onto the plug of the dialyzer and a cylindrical part for connecting the dialysate tube, an outer sleeve fitted onto the coupling part of the socket main body, and a spring-biased holder for pressing a locking ball, the holder being accommodated between the socket main body and the outer sleeve and capable of moving back and forth, and the socket is capable of being attached to or removed from the plug with a single operation because of the locking ball being temporarily released by the holder moving back and forth when the socket is to be attached to or removed from the plug, and

a front end portion of the holder constituting a protrusion that externally protrudes from a front end surface of the outer sleeve, so that when cleaning the socket, the locking ball can be released by pressing said protrusion of the holder to retract the holder, thereby canceling a constraint state of the locking ball.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Previously Presented): The socket for a dialyzer according to Claim 1, wherein the protrusion on the front end portion of the holder and front end surface of the outer sleeve are configured to be visually discriminable.

4. (Previously Presented): The socket for a dialyzer according to Claim 1, wherein the coupling part of the socket main body has a communication hole constituting an internal passage for the cleaning solution that is distant rearward from the accommodation hole for the locking ball by a predetermined distance, and when cleaning the socket, the cleaning solution penetrates into the internal passage between the accommodation hole for the locking ball and the communication hole.

5. (Previously Presented): The socket for a dialyzer according to Claim 1, wherein the coupling part of the socket main body has, on an inner wall thereof, an end face seal that abuts against an end of the plug of the dialyzer.

6. (Previously Presented): A method for cleaning a socket for a dialyzer using a cleaning adapter, wherein the socket connects a plug of the dialyzer and a dialysate tube for supplying or discharging a dialysate, the method comprising:

obtaining said socket for a dialyzer, the socket including:

a socket main body having a coupling part to be fitted onto the plug of the dialyzer and a cylindrical part for connecting the dialysate tube, wherein an outer sleeve is fitted onto the coupling part of the socket main body, and

a spring-biased holder for pressing a locking ball, wherein the holder is accommodated between the socket main body and the outer sleeve and capable of moving back and forth; wherein

the coupling part of said socket main body has a communication hole constituting an internal passage for the cleaning solution that is distant rearward from the accommodation hole for the locking ball by a predetermined distance, and a front end portion of said holder constituting a protrusion that externally protrudes from a front end surface of the outer sleeve;

obtaining said cleaning adapter, the cleaning adapter including a cylindrical adapter main body that has socket accommodation rooms for accommodating a coupling part of a socket provided on both sides of a block via a sealing member and a small-diameter passage for connecting the respective accommodation rooms formed in the block to pass therethrough, and locking collars for locking the socket that are fitted onto the both ends of the adapter main body

inserting the coupling part of the socket into a socket accommodation room of the adapter main body;

retracting the holder of the socket by the protrusion to release the locking ball as the adaptor main body and the socket are locked;

connecting a tube connecting cylinder part of the socket to a hose for cleaning solution;

circulating a cleaning solution through the adapter main body;

introducing the cleaning solution into the coupling part of the socket through the inside of the tube connecting cylindrical part; and

exposing the inner wall of the socket, the entire surface of the locking ball and contents in the internal passage to the cleaning solution.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Previously Presented): A cleaning adapter used for cleaning a socket for dialyzer comprising a socket main body having a coupling part to be fitted onto the plug of the dialyzer and a cylindrical part for connecting the dialysate tube, an outer sleeve fitted onto the coupling part of the socket main body, and a spring—biased holder for pressing a locking ball, the holder being accommodated between the socket main body and the outer sleeve and capable of moving back and forth, and the coupling part of the socket main body having a communication hole constituting an internal passage for the cleaning solution that is distant rearward from the accommodation hole for the locking ball by a predetermined distance, the cleaning adapter comprising:

a cylindrical adapter main body that has a plurality of socket accommodation rooms for accommodating a coupling part of a socket on both sides of a block and a small-diameter passage for connecting the respective accommodation rooms formed in the block to pass therethrough, and locking collars for locking the socket that are fitted onto the both ends of the adapter main body, and a pressing protrusion for pressing a protrusion on the holder provided on a bottom wall of the socket accommodation rooms of the adapter main body, the coupling part of the socket being adapted to be inserted into a socket accommodation room of the adapter main body, the holder being adapted to be retracted by the protrusion to release the locking ball to lock the adapter main body and the socket so that the cleaning solution can be circulated through the adapter main body so that the inner wall of the socket and contents in the internal passage are exposed to the cleaning solution.